

/TINE 1382 THE LONDONEKS **AND** THE NEW HEEESY

scant courtesy. They condemned his opinions, but were afraid to touch his person. A few days later, a broadsheet in Latin and English, in which he explained his views on Transubstantiation, was widely circulated in the city, and posted in the squares and streets.¹ Eeal interest was at this time felt by the London citizens in the controversy about the Sacramental elements. And, indeed, much more hung on the question than appeared in the obscure and unattractive technicalities. The Mediaeval Church and her opponents seem to have been aware from the first, that with the miracle of the Mass was closely connected the predominance of the clergy over the lay world. The cases of Aston's brother Oxonians, Hereford and Eepyngton, turned on the same question. They sent in a paper repudiating most of WyclinVs twenty-four condemned theses, but reserving their opinion on the mendicancy of the friars, and above all on the Eucharist. These two schoolmen were genuinely antagonistic to the regular orders, and had qualms as to the metaphysical soundness of Transubstantiation, but they were probably never real Lollards. They both lived to be reconciled to the Church and to persecute the heretics of the next generation. But at this juncture they did great service to Wycliffe by lending the weight of University opinion to his views on the Sacrament. Their answers were considered unsatisfactory, and on July 1 they were excommunicated by Courtenay.²

After the King's mandate of July 13, it was impossible for the condemned theologians to return to Oxford. Hereford, genuinely convinced that he was on the track of truth, and that the authorities could be brought to see it, set off to Home to appeal against Transubstantiation. He was not the first or last to imagine that, if only he could get a hearing from the Pope, he could move the Catholic Church out of old tradition into new paths. Aston and Eepyngton lay low for some months. Wycliffe, who had taken little or no part in the late controversies at Oxford, was probably at Lutterworth writing; he was busy with his pen this and every other year till Ms death. By the King's mandate, the University town,

¹ *Fasc. #.*, 289-90, and 329-30; Wilkins, iii, 164 ;
Wals., ii. 65-6. " *Fasc. Z*^ 290 and 318-28.